

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant notes the Office Action's acknowledgement of Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d), receipt of all certified copies of the priority documents and approval of the drawings and consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement, both filed on March 3, 2004.

Claims 2 and 5 stand objected to for minor informalities. Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,550,638 to Ikeda in combination with U.S. Patent No. 5,784,180 to Sakai et al. (hereinafter "Sakai"). Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakai in combination with Ikeda.

By this amendment, the specification at pages 2, 19, 20, and 22-28 has been amended to correct minor errors. Claims 1-10 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Therefore, any outstanding objections to or rejections of these claims have been rendered moot. New claims 11-17 have been added to the application.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 11-17 are now pending in this application for consideration.

Applicant respectfully submits that each of the pending claims is patentably distinguishable over the cited references as required by § § 102 or 103. Applicant further submits that none of the cited references, whether considered alone or in combination, discloses Applicant's claimed image reading method including ***storing a digital monochromatic signal and digital color signals that are output from the BK line sensor and the R, G and B line sensors as a black reference data with a light source turned off.*** Each of the independent claims requires this patentable feature or similar language. By contrast, the cited references fail to disclose, teach or suggest this claimed feature.

Accordingly, new independent claims 11, 12, 14 and 16 and claims dependent therefrom, are patentably distinguishable over the cited references. This distinction will be further described below.

THE CLAIMS DISTINGUISH OVER THE CITED REFERENCES

Claims 1-9 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Ikeda in combination with Sakai and claim 10 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Sakai in combination with Ikeda. Without conceding to the appropriateness of these rejections, these rejections are respectfully traversed with respect to newly pending claims 11-17, since neither of the cited references discloses the claimed image reading method that ***stores a digital monochromatic signal and digital color signals that are output from the BK line sensor and the R, G and B line sensors as a black reference data with a light source turned off***. With this arrangement, the time required for shading correction and realizing high efficiency and high speed of the image reading operation can be realized (*see*, Specification, Page 3, lines 12-15). Support for the subject matter recited in new claims 11-17 can at least be found on page 22, line 1 through page 28, line 20 and FIGS. 14-16 of the present specification.

Ikeda discloses an image processing apparatus including a circuit for inputting a plurality of color component signals of a subtractive color system, a circuit for detecting a minimum value signal, a circuit for emphasizing a high-frequency component and a circuit for discriminating a feature of an image in accordance with the minimum value signal (Ikeda, Abstract, lines 1-8). Sakai also discloses an image processing apparatus having an input device inputting first color components signals, a converter for converting the first color component signals into second color component signals, an output device for serially outputting the second color component signals and a controller for controlling the input and output devices (Sakai, Abstract, lines 1-7).

Applicant respectfully submits, however, that the Ikeda and Sakai references fail to disclose or suggest ***storing a digital monochromatic signal and digital color signals that are output from the BK line sensor and the R, G and B line sensors as a black reference data with a light source turned off*** as required by the claims. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that even if these cited references are combinable, since the cited references fail to

disclose each of the features of the independent claims, these references cannot be said to either anticipate or render obvious the subject matter recited therein.

Applicant respectfully submits that new independent claims 11, 12, 14 and 16 are patentably distinguishable over the cited references and thus, allowable. Moreover, since independent claims 11, 12, 14 and 16 are allowable, claims dependent therefrom, namely claims 13, 15 and 17, are also allowable by virtue of their direct or indirect dependence from allowable independent claims 12, 14 and 16 and for containing other patentable features.

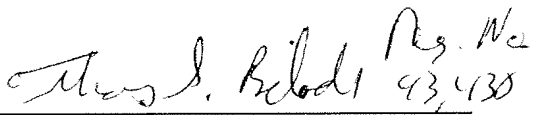
Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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